



B I S H O P O F H A M I L T O N

September 15, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the Hamilton Diocese,

Sunday, October 2nd is designated as Respect Life Sunday, a day on which we are asked to think about the value of each human person, regardless of their age or personal challenges. From conception until natural death, we recognize that each person is created in God's own image.

The measure of a life is not found in exterior attributes, such as power, beauty, wealth or athleticism, but in understanding that life itself is precious. We as Catholics are called to look beyond any secular view of life and to recognize our call to protect and care for every person. As Pope Benedict has said, "human life must be defended and supported at every stage. No-one, in fact, is master of his own existence; rather, we are all called to safeguard and respect life, from the moment of conception until natural end".

Each one of us gives witness to the value of life: by the support we offer to those around us, by our engagement in life issues in our society and by our prayers, hoping that one day we can achieve a universal understanding of the dignity of every individual.

The call to promote a respect for life falls to all who understand that life is valuable, despite struggles, imperfections and even illness; that each person has something to contribute to our world; and that we must promote life so that every person is protected.

On October 2nd, National Life Chain Sunday offers us one such opportunity. Thousands of people across the country will stand at busy intersections from 2:30 to 3:30 pm holding signs reminding people that abortion is harmful to both mothers and children. In silence and prayer, people will stand in solidarity for life. You may wish to contact your local Right to Life organization for more information and to find out how you can join in this initiative.

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We also have in our Diocese, in Guelph, Kitchener/Waterloo and Oakville, the opportunity to engage in a campaign called '40 Days for Life' from Sept. 28th to Nov. 6th. The campaign is made up of three key components: **1) Prayer and fasting:** inviting people of faith to join together for 40 days of fervent prayer and fasting for an end to abortion; **2) Peaceful Vigil:** standing for life through a 40-day peaceful public witness outside hospitals where abortions are performed; **3) Community Outreach:** taking a positive, upbeat pro-life message to our cities. You can find out more by searching "40 days for Life" on the Internet.

These are but two of the many ways we can take a stand for life. Prayers, donations to pro-life agencies, support and caring for the ill and elderly are all ways that we can uphold the dignity of life. Life is God's greatest gift; we must nurture and protect it from conception until natural death. Please take some time to discern where God might be calling you to engage in the promotion of life in our Diocese.

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Douglas Crosby OMI". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton